

The Ultimate Stress Buster

THE DESTINATION SPA

BY HELEN GOLDSTEIN

TIME OUT. IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE TIME OUT FOR YOU OR MAYBE WITH A GROUP OF GOOD FRIENDS FOR 2 DAYS OR IF YOU'RE LUCKY 10 DAYS OF PAMPERING, REJUVENATING AND RENEWING YOUR BODY MIND AND SPIRIT. WHERE TO GO? - WHAT IS IT LIKE TO SURRENDER TO THE IDEA THAT RIGHT NOW IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU AND YOUR HEALING.

SO, IF HAVING A GREAT MASSAGE, BODY WORK, FACIALS, GREAT HEALTHY FOOD, AND ALL THE GRACIOUSNESS YOU CAN HANDLE ALL IN A BEAUTIFUL SETTING APPEALS TO YOU...THINK DESTINATION SPA.

THE DESTINATION SPA

Europe and the Far East have a centuries old history of spas and wellness centres...It is just understood that it is part of the culture and one retreats to a place to "take the waters" or for "the cure".

In the last few years hundreds of spas and wellness centres have opened in North America. There are centres such as Kripalu Yoga Centre in Massachusetts (here I took my yoga teacher training) that cater to an esoteric clientele who want vegetarian food, really innovative spa treatments and cutting edge program-

ming. Kripalu was once a monastery so the accommodation can be simple but many guests from nearby Canyon Ranch often wander over for the programs. At the other end of the spectrum is Mirabel Spa in Arizona- a luxurious state of the art facility with all of the spa treatments you can imagine and more, plus some very good programs.

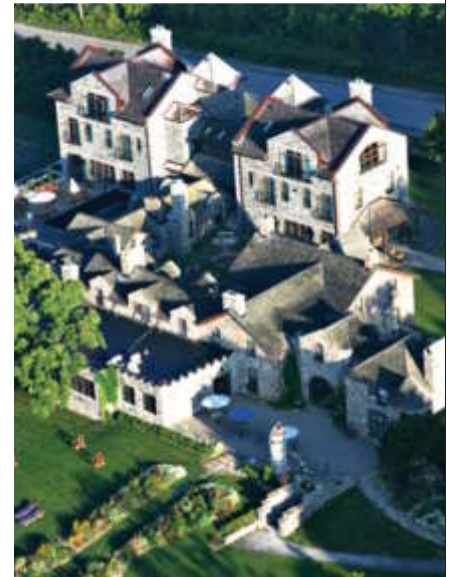
ONTARIO'S DESTINATION SPA EXPERIENCE

In Ontario there are dozens of spas

offering treatments such as Thai Massage, Lomi Lomi , Hot Stone Treatments (all once considered fringe), as well as traditional Swedish Massage and Facials. One spa, Grail Springs in Bancroft, offers fasting retreats.

Its just so easy to relax and de-stress at these spas - all your needs are taken care of by staff who understand that the guests are there for rest and renewal and that some of them have 2 days to reach a level of relaxation. The staff members are trained to support you.





Images courtesy of Ste. Anne's Spa in Grafton, Ontario

Many spas encourage you to get away from it all...no phones, no TVs, no outside information that may cause stress. It is like living in this loving cocoon and emerging a butterfly. Since most spas are in beautiful settings it is easy to take part in nature by walking the grounds or just vegging out and enjoying the scenery and fresh air.

At Ste Anne's Spa in Grafton you can spend your entire getaway wearing a delicious fluffy bathrobe. That bathrobe is the great equalizer. You don't have to

think about what to wear unless you plan to take one of the many activities from pilates to yoga to meditation offered daily. CEOs to Secretaries sit in the dining room, relaxed chuckles and murmurs coming from other patrons, many wearing that white bathrobe. There is a lot to be said for such a uniform and the ease it creates among the guests (designer handbags aside).

I lead yoga retreats and I always meet the most interesting and interested people there. We have a common

denominator...we chose a spa holiday instead of Disneyworld or Las Vegas. I can see the difference in my guests from day 1 to day 4 in terms of their ease and their stress levels dissolving.

To me a spa getaway is the perfect pick me up. Ideally it would be so nurturing to go 2 times a year, perhaps during the change of seasons. Consider it a tune up just like the one for your car. You know how well your car runs after one...only this is a tune up for your psyche body and spirit. You deserve it!